

REMARKS

The indication that claims 3, 5, 6, 10, 11 and 16 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, is acknowledged.

By the present amendment, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the features of objected to claim 3 therein, with claim 3 being canceled so that claim 1, as amended, represents objected to claim 3 written in independent form, and should now be in condition for allowance. Furthermore, claims 5 and 6 have been written in independent form incorporating the features of original parent claims therein such that these claims should also now be in condition for allowance. Applicants note that claims 10, 11 and 16 have been amended to depend from an allowable claim while clarifying features, where necessary, such that these claims should also now be in condition for allowance.

Applicants note that claims 7, 8, 12, 13, 14 and 15 stand rejected to as being in improper form, but such claims do not stand rejected over the cited art. Accordingly, by the present amendment, claims 7, 8 and 13 have been written in independent form such that applicants submit that these claims should now be in condition for allowance, and claims 12, 14 and 15 have been amended to depend from an allowable claim, such that these claims should also now be in condition for allowance.

As to the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 9 and 17 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakazato (JP 2001-002330) in view of Sato (US Patent No. 6,798,430), such rejection is considered to be obviated by the amendment of claim 1 to incorporate the features of dependent objected to claim 3 therein and the

cancellation of claim 2 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. Furthermore, dependent claim 4 has been amended to depend from claim 1 or claim 5 which claims should be considered allowable independent claims, and therefore, claim 4 should also be considered allowable at this time. Claims 9 and 17 have been amended to depend from claim 1, which is considered to be an allowable independent claim, such that these claims should also now be in condition for allowance. Therefore, discussion of the cited art in relation to the present claims is considered unnecessary.

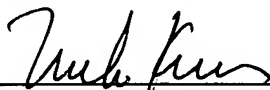
Also, by the present amendment, a new dependent claim 18, dependent upon claim 1, which should be allowable, and reciting features corresponding to that originally presented in claim 5 has been presented, such that this claim should also be in condition for allowance.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicants submit that all claims present in this application should now be in condition for allowance and issuance of an action of favorable nature is courteously solicited.

To the extent necessary, applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case: 500.43243X00), and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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